Charles Anderson McKenzie – Prof. Eng., FCSI

Died 23rd January 2021. Born in Toronto 16th February 1921, he was the first of two sons to Elizabeth Clubb McKenzie (nee Anderson) and James McKenzie. Predeceased by his brother Archie in 2012.

Charles was intelligent, inventive, a complex character, a deep thinker, dependable, gentlemanly, raised with the Christian values of the day and always proud of his Scottish heritage. Not a boastful man, these things must be told of him. He did well at school – math abilities his great endowment. Charles attended the University of Toronto and a year at McGill University. During summer breaks, he hand-dug post holes for telegraph poles in Northern Ontario for 'Ma Bell' to help with tuition fees – "hardest work I ever did". Charles graduated from U of T in 1942 with a BA Sc. Degree in Applied Sciences and Engineering. The war in Europe and Pacific still raging.

He first worked at Imperial Oil Ltd., then transferred to Polymer Corp, an embryonic company. In the earliest stages of development, it was tasked with finding a reliable source of synthetic rubber for Canada and the Allies, Japan had cut off all supplies of natural rubber from Malaya.

The requirement to make a difference in to the war effort was enormous – some 40,000 tons. The push was on. The following was printed at the end of the war: "The established production of artificial rubber in huge quantities was the greatest engineering feat of the 20th century, second only to the US led Manhattan Project."

In 1944, Charles joined the Canadian Navy, first as an able seaman. He then applied and was sent to Halifax for Officer

training, graduating Sub Lieut. Junior Navigation Officer serving in corvettes and one frigate. In February 1945, he married Betty McMillan.

He was home on leave in late July 1945 before deployment to the Pacific (likely the Philippines). The August 6th surprise nuclear bombings over Japan brought about the peace agreement days later. Hostilities now over, young Officer McKenzie was never out of Canadian Waters, saying he had fought the battle of the Bay of Fundy (very rough seas). He soon demobilized, anxious to return to his chosen field of chemical research.

Son David was born in 1946, then son Peter who died in infancy. Susan followed in 1951. Charles loved the 'briny' – all stretches of water. 1954 saw completion of a new beach front home overlooking broad Lake Huron. All joyfully moved in, water sports and summer activities provided great times; golf a firm favourite.

Throughout those happy years, Charles worked hard. Socially active with church committees, choir membership and Polysar Glee Club, often taking lead roles in much loved Gilbert and Sullivan operettas using his good quality speaking and singing voice. He busied himself with fundraising for the Red Feather (now known as the United Way), long term foster parenting in foreign lands and was a blood donor until past giving age. He was also involved with the completion and presentation of a pavilion highlighting the petro chemical industry in Canada for Expo '67 in Montreal.

Charles McKenzie was a company man who rose through the ranks. Able to conduct business in fluent French, over time he was given assignments in Paris, Fribourg (building of a new plant) and Belgium. While in Belgium for the second time, his wife became seriously ill and they returned to Canada.

By 1973, Polymer Corp had become a major employer and influence in Sarnia and district and was renamed Polysar

International. Betty died in 1974.

Charles was promoted to Vice President of Marketing for North and South America Rubber Operations and travelled extensively to Gulf States and often to Mexico. December 1976 he remarried.

Late 1978 brought retirement officially in ceremony #3 on the company's employee list. Thereafter doing consulting work for Petrosar, a smaller 'sister company' producing plastics, plus a stint in Ottawa for the Department of Energy Mines and Resources. Early in 1981 the shared decision was made to leave 'cold Ontario' and so along with wife and beloved feline Rufus, the move was made to Victoria, namely Cordova Bay Ridge. Charles joined St. Luke's congregation and choir, men's club, committed time to fundraising and was a member of the board for the redevelopment of Dawson Heights. The man's active productive mind needed additional stimulus and went to books, cryptic crosswords and newspapers. Toyed with the idea of starting a small company, he listed his name on the register of Professional Engineers of BC in case anyone out there is reading this?

He then took the Canadian Securities Course and was hired by Pitfield MacKay Ross, later Dominion Securities and by 1987 had successfully passed with honours, the examination requirements of Canadian Investment Finance Parts I and II followed by conference of FSCI (Fellow of the Canadian Securities Institute). He enjoyed the work but worried about it.

Soon after all that work and study came the 1988 Wall Street crash and due to his 'newness' in the company, he was left again wondering what to do? Living by this time in Cadboro Bay which offered fine walks, salt air, easy views of the ocean and a "wee drappy" with friends at the Barley Mow. Involved now with the busy social activities of the local chapter of U of T alumni and longevity studies at UVic, life was pleasant.

Nonetheless, he decided to take the H&R Block tax course and worked seasonally. He then took the US course and the Canadian Teaching Course.

In 1989, Gibson the magnificent marmalade cat came to the household. What company and fun he was for 21 years. Very unsettling news came in 1990 and despite efforts to counter it, a move to Saanich Peninsula was best, this time to a new house better suited to ageing needs.

The move came in 1995, and Charles joined Holy Trinity Church choir and men's club, serving on the parish council, conducting four sessions of the Alpha Course, and continuing with H&R Block at tax time, including tax writing for Beacon Community Services, retiring at 80. He joined the shore keepers group – a committed band of volunteers engaged in the repair of forest walkways, riparian pathways and watercourses. Beach quality studies were of particular interest to him. He developed new interests, one in acrylic painting taking several courses and another long distance walking in the Yorkshire Dales, Yorkshire Cotswolds until his 2 knee replacements stopped it abruptly at 92 years old.

Happily, his 99th birthday was celebrated in style over a long weekend at Bear Mountain Resort. He often recalled it with pleasure.

March 2020, as with so many in advanced age Charles was negatively affected by Covid-19 restrictions. Adult daycare centres closed, outings curtailed. The resulting isolation increasing physical disabilities, severe hearing loss frustrated him. Life became a struggle. October saw 5 weeks in hospital, 2 months in long term care until his sudden death.

Charles leaves his devoted wife saddened; children David (Christine) and Susan (Gary); grandsons John (Rebecca) and Sam; granddaughters Julie (Jay) and Katherine (Mark); two great grandsons; four great granddaughters; sister-in-law

Grace; three nephews; one niece; four grand nephews and one grand niece.

Cremation has taken place and a Celebration of Life will be held in Ontario when it is safe to do so.

His story is long. His life was long.

SAIL ON man of stature. A good friend to many.

May you now rest in peace. †

With much appreciation for the care and attention given by McCall Gardens.

Condolences may be offered to the family at www.mccallgardens.com.